

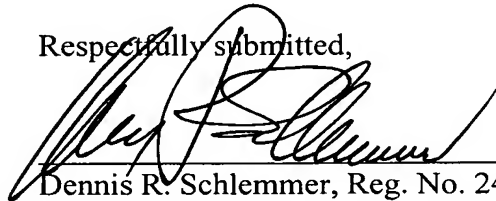
*REMARKS*

By this amendment, claim 22 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 29, claim 49 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 52, claims 33-37, which were indicated as being directed to allowable subject matter, have been rewritten in independent form as new claim 53, and claim 43, which has been indicated as being directed to allowable subject matter, has been rewritten in independent form as new claim 54. New claim 55 corresponds to the main claim granted in the corresponding European patent, which has now been published under EP 1 57 859.

Since the claims as now presented all are believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art so as to be in condition for allowance, an early action to that effect is respectfully requested.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Dennis R. Schlemmer, Reg. No. 24,703  
LEYDIG, VOIT & MAYER, LTD.  
Two Prudential Plaza, Suite 4900  
180 North Stetson Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60601-6731  
(312) 616-5600 (telephone)  
(312) 616-5700 (facsimile)

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